

THE DETERMINATION BEHIND BIG WOMEN LOOKS TOO STRONG FOR THEM TO QUIT

BY JANE WHITAKER

It was with amusement that I heard of the meeting of Big Business to coerce Hull House, through Miss Jane Addams and Miss Ellen Gates Starr, into withdrawing its support of the girl waitresses on strike at Henrici's restaurant for an \$8 wage and one day of rest in seven.

I felt amused for two reasons. In the first place, I had talked to Miss Starr the day she was arrested for protesting as a citizen against the arrest of girl pickets who were not in any way breaking the law, and I knew then that nothing would ever intimidate her and that deep in her heart was a big determination to be loyal to the girls, even though it entailed the disagreeable experience of arrest by city policemen protecting the interests of capital.

And my second reason for amusement was the fact that J. R. Thorne of Montgomery Ward & Company presided at that meeting of Big Business.

This is real inconsistent of Thorne. He must have forgotten that he submitted a list to the O'Hara Welfare Commission in which he showed that the least a girl could live on was \$8 a week and then only if she did not have any laundry done.

Thorne claimed he obtained this list from one of his women employees to whom he paid \$8 a week. The list follows:

"Room, \$3; breakfasts, 40 cents; lunches, 90 cents; dinners, \$1.40; carfare, 60 cents, and clothes \$1.70."

Of course you will admit that 40 cents for breakfasts, which allows a fraction over 5 cents a morning, is the minimum amount a girl may spend, as is every other item on the carefully prepared list.

But though the girl who submitted the list might have been permitted by the generous Mr. Thorne to work without having any laundry work done, restaurant keepers will assure you they insist that waitresses at least wear clean aprons, and as this is no inconsiderable item, even Thorne's carefully prepared, stingy list of expenses included in an \$8 wage would not cover the expenses of the waitresses.

Again, 60 cents for carfare only covers six days of work a week and these girls are at present working seven days, so they would be ten cents carfare short on even an \$8 wage.

Of course, since Montgomery Ward & Company does not, so far as the public knows, work girls on Sunday, it could not be that Thorne was objecting to the one day of rest, though

the majority of employers in the Employers' Association do work girl employees on Sundays, and in some instances have the blinds drawn while they do it.

And certainly, since by Thorne's own figures, a waitress could not get along on even \$8 a week, he could not be protesting against an \$8 wage.

Therefore, we must assume that Thorne is just a figure-head inconsistently backing the employers against any fight that girls may wage for decent working conditions.

But he was rather foolish to preside at a meeting called to attempt to coerce Jane Addams, for the name of Jane Addams is, from coast to coast, synonymous with the struggle of women to obtain better conditions, and she is known throughout the world as the friend of oppressed women.

I visited Miss Nestor, president of the Women's Trade Union League, and recently elected by President Wilson as a member of the Industrial Commission, and asked her what she thought of this latest horse-play of the employers.